

Charlotte County administrator's update for 11/25/15

RaceFest draws thousands to Englewood Beach

By Raymond Sandrock, Charlotte County administrator

Thousands of powerboat racing fans attended the Englewood Beach RaceFest last weekend. More than 35 powerboats from around the world raced along a 2.5-mile course in the Gulf of Mexico off Englewood Beach. The four-day event was organized by the not-for-profit group Englewood Beach WaterFest, which is comprised of local business, civic and charitable leaders. Charlotte County, which operates Englewood Beach and Chadwick Park, site of the event's wet pits, partnered with the group to stage the event.

The Charlotte County Commission approved \$118,000 in cash and in-kind services to Englewood Beach Waterfest for RaceFest, including race management, public safety reimbursements, permit waivers and site preparation. The Charlotte Harbor Visitor and Convention Bureau secured a Florida Sports Foundation grant and conducted a spectator survey to be used to generate an estimate of the event's economic impact.

By all accounts, the event was a resounding success for the community. Congratulations to the Englewood Beach Waterfest board of directors and all its volunteers for staging such an impressive event and to all the racers and their support crews for coming to Englewood Beach.

Midway closure

Midway Boulevard will be closed to through traffic from Achilles Street to Kings Highway beginning Dec. 7 through the spring of 2016 as Midway is widened to four lanes. Traffic will be detoured via Rampart Boulevard, Avacado Avenue and Achilles Street. Message boards and traffic control devices will assist travelers through the detour. Mail delivery, emergency services and access to local residences will be maintained during construction. For information, go to www.MidwayUpdate.com or call 866.556.2200.

Harbor Blvd. closure

Harbor Boulevard will be closed for one block from Edgewater Drive to Salem Avenue from 10 a.m., Monday through 10 a.m., Dec. 21.

Drivers will not be able to access the Edgewater Drive intersection from the north and can follow a local detour to U.S. 41. Harbor Boulevard south of Edgewater Drive will be accessible via Edgewater Drive at U.S. 41.

For information, go to www.GoEP2.com or call 941.624.6372.

Photo contest

Florida Association of Counties President Barbara Sharief selected a photo by Charlotte County Public Works Maintenance and Operations Manager John Elias to be included in the organization's 2016 calendar. The announcement was made at the FAC's annual legislative conference held last week on Amelia Island.

Elias's photo, taken from the historic community of Charlotte Harbor, captured a massive lightning strike above the Barron Collier and Gilchrist bridges over the Peace River this past summer. The photo was selected from more than 500 submitted for the contest.

Charlotte County Commission Chairman Bill Truex and commissioners Chris Constance and Ken Doherty, along with Legislative Manager Emily Lewis and I, attended the annual legislative conference Nov. 17-20. Commissioner Constance is the first vice president and Chairman Truex is the District 30 representative of the FAC.

Sports Park

Charlotte Sports Park recently played host to the Prostyle Sunshine Classic Baseball Tournament. Teams played 30 games on five fields over two days, Nov. 14-15. More than 1,100 players, coaches and fans attended the weekend tournament.

On Nov. 14, the Sports Park parking lot also served as the starting and finish lines for the 4th annual Tippecanoe Trail & Mud Run, which attracted more than 400 participants competing in 5k and 10k races and a 1k Fun Run through the Tippecanoe Environment Park.

Participants should receive an email with a link to a survey about their experience, as Community Services staff aims to make the next run bigger and better.

Event recruitment

Visitors Bureau staff attended the Travel, Events, and Management in Sports (TEAMS) Conference & Expo, Nov. 10-12 in Las Vegas. The conference provided educational sessions as well as various networking opportunities.

Bureau staff met with more than two dozen event organizers to discuss the potential of Charlotte County hosting one or more of their events. Several strong leads were generated and/or relationships created with a variety of organizations including the Professional Disc Golf Association, Orienteering USA, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, the National Veterans Golden Age Games, U.S. National Armwrestling, TruSports, and Tough Mudder. The VCB is actively gathering more information and evaluating the feasibility of hosting 12 events discussed during the conference.

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